Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 10 2012

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a vital safety net for many low-income families, especially for our elderly, our disabled, and our veterans. As state agencies prepare their LIHEAP programs for the coming winter, it is imperative that the Department of Health and Human Services immediately release as much LIHEAP funding as possible under the current continuing resolution (CR).

As you know, spending patterns for LIHEAP assistance are not consistent throughout the fiscal year. Instead, the majority of assistance in many states is distributed during the winter months to offset high home heating costs. Many state governors have also projected that delays in LIHEAP funding would result in families across the country having unmet heating needs this winter. As you are also aware, low-income families spend a higher percentage of their income on energy costs. This is especially true during times of extreme temperatures and increased energy prices. October marks the beginning of the coldest months for many families, and with continued elevated levels of unemployment across our states, this year's heating season will be an even greater struggle. The timing is crucial for the release of the majority of LIHEAP funding.

Accordingly, we believe it is critical that the states begin the process of assisting those individuals with the greatest needs immediately. We request that you release as much LIHEAP funding as possible under the current CR without delay, in order to allow states and low-income households the resources they need to prepare for a challenging winter. With forecasts for above-normal snowfall for all major I-95 cities, including New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, the timing is critical.

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Thank you for your continued support of the LIHEAP program and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Steven C. LaTourette

James P. McGovern

Peter Welch

Steny H. Hoyer

Barney Frank

John Dingell

Chellie Pingree

Christopher S. Murphy

Brian Higgins

David Loebsack

David Cicilline

Diana DeGette

James R Langevin

John Lewis

John Tierney

Louise Slaughter

Mark Critz

Maurice Hinchey

Michael E. Capuano

Mike Doyle

Mike Michaud

Luis Gutierrez

John A. Yarmuth

Stephen F. Lynch

Chris Van Hollen

Niki Tsongas

John Olver

Raul Grijalva

Richard E. Neal

Steve Israel

William R. Keating

Edolphus Towns

Keith Ellison

Sander M. Levin

Jan Schakowsky

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Joe Courtney

Dutch Ruppersberger

Carolyn McCarthy

Charles B. Rangel

Rush D. Holt

Steve Cohen

Donna Edwards

Lou Barletta

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Gary Peters

Rick Larsen

Jerrold Nadler

Marcia L. Fudge

Michael G. Grimm

Frank C. Guinta

Alcee L. Hastings

Michael M. Honda

Sheila Jackson Lee

Henry C "Hank" Johnson, Jr.

Peter T. King

José E. Serrano

Carolyn B. Maloney

Betty McCollum

James P. Moran

Todd Russell Platts

Mike Quigley

Laura Richardson

Bobby L. Rush

Tim Ryan

Loretta Sanchez

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Betty Sutton

Jason Altmire

Ron Barber

Roscoe G. Bartlett

Charles F. Bass

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Elijah E. Cummings

Dale E. Kildee

Bennie G. Thompson

Silvestre Reyes

John Conyers, Jr.

Allyson Schwartz

John B. Larson

Robert A. Brady

Yvette D. Clarke

William Owens

Gwen Moore

Suzanne Bonamici

Dennis J. Kucinich

Paul D. Tonko

Gerald E. Connolly

Rosa DeLauro